Artist Statement

For the past three years I have been a volunteer at Rainey Institute located on East 55th. I learned something new every day there. I have learned how to be patient with children, how to convince them school is fun, and most importantly I have learned that they too can teach me. Rainey Institute is a visual and performing arts school for children in the greater Cleveland area. The school welcomes kids ages 3-18 to participate in the arts. Many of these kids come from low income struggling families. Rainey is a place where these kids are surrounded by leadership and positive role models, and I am more than thankful to have been a part of these their lives.

I have built many relationships with the kids at Rainey. Every time I walk in, I know I will be greeted with big hugs and warm smiles. While I am there, we discuss what has happened since the last time we met. The kids always have a story to share and many questions to ask. All of the kids at Rainey are curious about life. They constantly ask me about the way I live and love to share their own experiences with me. If they are struggling with something, they ask for my help. At times like this, I have felt like a leader. They listen to me and look at me as positive role model.

Throughout the years, I have seen numerous projects completed by these kids, and I couldn’t be more proud of them. For example, the kids last spring created their own superhero whose character was similar to their own. They drew out these super heroes and eventually created masks they could wear. After they created these masks, many of them walked in the Cleveland Arts Parade. This was a chance for the kids to express themselves through their own hard work. Many of the kids at Rainey also participated in the Christmas play this year, and constantly practice the violin with Rainey’s El Sistema Program year round. Watching these kids grow both literally and through their work as been more than a pleasure, and I can’t believe how much they have accomplished.